

RICHARD HUGH BAKER

6TH DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

**COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515-1806

October 18, 2007

**COMMITTEE ON
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**COMMITTEE ON
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

Dear Friends:

I want you to hear the facts from me about the current Washington, DC debate over health care for our children. Based on recent press reports, many people are asking, ***"What's going on up there?"***

First, in 1997, Congress created a program to help children from lower income families get health insurance. The program is operated by the state, but paid for with federal dollars. I helped create this program ten years ago when I voted for it. It's called the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP.

This program provides real help to families that can't get health insurance for their kids. In our area, children in a family of four that earns up to about **\$41,000 a year** can get health insurance through SCHIP.

The debate in Washington, DC is focused on two main questions. First, should this program be **expanded** to cover families who earn more than **\$80,000 a year**; and second, how to find a way to pay for it.

The first plan to pay for the expansion was to take money away from Medicare. That's right, some thought it was a good idea to take money from seniors who couldn't afford health care and send their money to families who earned more than **\$80,000 a year**. When I pointed this out, that plan went away.

Now Congress is looking at a different plan that keeps the expansion for families earning more than \$80,000 a year through 2013, but then shuts off most funding for SCHIP in 2012. What happens then? Well, even the basic program will shut down. **In 2012, there won't be enough funding to cover even the poorest of children enrolled in SCHIP.**

Right now there are nearly **70,000 children in Louisiana that are eligible** for SCHIP that the state **hasn't enrolled** in the program. Shouldn't we make sure that those with the greatest need are served before we expand the program? I believe this is especially true when the proposed expansion will cost an additional \$35 billion we don't have.

I have supported and will continue to support health care assistance for those with clear financial need. That's the right thing to do.

I will also continue in my effort to establish a complete health care system that fairly meets the needs of our communities. This is not an easy task, but representing the Sixth District requires me to make difficult decisions, and that's exactly what I'll do.

If you have questions or concerns about SCHIP, I hope that you contact me. As always, I am honored to serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard H. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent and the last name "Baker" following in a similar style.

Richard H. Baker
Member of Congress